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ABSTRACT

The transcript of a conference presentation describes, with audience activities, one college instructor's use of videotaped television broadcasts for English-as-a-Second-Language instruction in Taiwan. The method, intended primarily for developing listening skills, makes use of English-language satellite television now widely available. Students use tapes of authentic broadcasts in class and are encouraged to watch the same network in their leisure time. A primary objective is for students to feel comfortable enough with English language listening to undertake it on their own. News broadcasts and music videos have been particularly useful instructional materials. The news stories broadcast on the satellite network are generally of international or general human interest, address varied topics, are authentic, contain varied language, are culturally structured, and because of their nature, often provide additional aids to comprehension. The topics may already be familiar from native-language broadcasts. News stories offer a variety of classroom activities. Music videos are appealing to students and offer many possibilities for listening activities, including use of cloze tests and analyses of lyrics, music, and visual activity. Group questions and handouts used in class and in the presentation are appended. (MSE)

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ED 366 222

LEARNING TO LISTEN TO AUTHENTIC ENGLISH FROM SATELLITE TV

A workshop presented at the
Thai TESOL Fourteenth Annual Convention
Theme: "Learner-Centered Methodology"
January 13 - 15, 1994
Bangkok, Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

One of the problems facing teachers in EFL contexts is providing students with sufficient English language input. At advanced levels, students and even teachers may become bored with the usual twenty-lesson text with accompanying audiotape and the usual exercises. While the more outgoing students may try to seek out native speakers in the community, others may feel they have nowhere to turn for additional input. Yet in the growing economies of Southeast Asia, more and more publications and broadcasts are available in foreign languages, for the most part in English. This is particularly true in the phenomenal growth of satellite and cable TV.

STAR-TV can be found all over Asia--in India, where a Hindi Channel replaces the Chinese (Mandarin) Channel, and as far as the Middle East. One station it relays--the BBC World Service--can be received from other satellite TV networks over Europe and Africa and beyond that soon. While I will be using examples from STAR-TV, primarily examples from the BBC World Service (Katchen, 1992; Katchen, 1993b), program genres are much the same anywhere and the techniques could be applied for teaching any language.

I teach English majors at National Tsing Hua University in

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Taiwan. My experience in using video is tied to a course I developed and began to teach two years ago--Advanced Listening and Speaking with Video (Katchen, 1993a). It differs from any other listening and speaking course in that all the materials are on video, mostly authentic video, from programs that can be viewed on TV in Taiwan.

My reason for using authentic video with students is quite simple: it's there. Most of my students now have STAR-TV at home; they can even watch it on the dormitory TVs. The better students watch programs they like in order to improve their English; the poorer students are afraid of English programs without subtitles.

This fear of not comprehending one hundred percent of each utterance is probably related to students' attitude toward reading comprehension. Despite patient teaching of skimming and scanning techniques, teachers still complain that most of their students read word by word, laboriously looking up each new word in a dictionary as they encounter it without trying to guess the meaning from the context or get the main idea of the sentence or the paragraph. Yet while the written word stays on the page in a fixed form we can readily check, the spoken word has no such permanence or clarity. If students cannot comprehend what the word or phrase was, they cannot check its meaning in a dictionary; hence the even greater fear of listening to authentic material.

So what can the teacher do to bridge this gap, to give students practice and confidence in their ability to listen to authentic English material? More importantly, how can we

teachers get students to use the input around them to continue practicing and perfecting their listening skills?

First, I tell students it's quite normal that they don't understand everything. Then, little by little, I show them some techniques, some tricks they can use to help their understanding, especially if they have a VCR and can thereby watch the same program more than once. I expose them to and help them understand and enjoy some kinds of programs they may not have viewed before. My goal is simple: when they go home, when the course is over, I hope that occasionally they will freely choose to watch TV in English (or in any other language they are studying) and, while being entertained or getting some new information, they are also improving, reinforcing, or at the very least maintaining their language skills.

When I started the course, I depended heavily on news broadcasts. I've also been trying other activities with other types of programming in my class, and today I plan to show you some of these, beginning with activities with three news stories and then some activities with a music video. Now, are you ready to be students for the next hour and a half?

NEWS STORIES

Demonstration of Activities. Now we are going to watch a news story silently. While you watch, I'd like you to look for the answers to the following questions. What is the problem this story discusses? What are the causes of the problem? What are the effects of the problem?

[WATCH STORY ON POLLUTION IN MEXICO CITY SILENTLY]
[SOLICIT ANSWERS]

Do you see how much you know without even hearing it? Now let me ask you another question: What is the location of this story? Guess. How can you tell? Now let's listen to the story. Listen for the place and check the causes and effects you guessed.

[PLAY WITH SOUND]

What are some of the suggested solutions to the problem? Now let me show you the complete text on the OHP for you to check. Let's see if we can listen to the story while we watch the text. [LISTEN AGAIN] In class you could give a handout (A) at this point. If the students could watch the stories you teach on their own time, a handout might not just be wasted paper.

Now we are going to watch another story, a related story, this time with sound. We are going to look for the answers to the 5 WH questions--who? what? where? when? why?

[SHOW BANGKOK POLLUTION STORY]

What are your answers? Here the WHAT? is the problem under discussion. What is the cause of the problem? And the cause of that cause? Who is being affected and in what way? Are any solutions proposed? You see, for most stories, the important information comes in the answers to the 5 WHs or is contained in a statement of the problem, causes, effects, and/or solutions.

There are some new words in this story. I don't know about your students, but for mine, some might know these words, some

might not, so let me ask you. What does affluence mean? Can you guess from the context? How about the phrase bear the brunt? noxious? coax and cajole? terminal as in terminal cancer? urban? stilts?

Now I'm going to ask you to do another linguistic exercise with the same story. This time, I'm going to give you some words which are said in this story. Shall we use these new words we just talked about or others? I have five words, but each of you will be assigned only one word. This row has special, the next available, million, serious, predict. Listen for your word and when you hear it, write down as many of the words you remember that came directly before and after your word. Do you understand?

[PLAY THAI POLLUTION STORY AGAIN]

What about the word ...
Now we'll play it one more time so that you can hear all your words again. [PLAY ONE MORE TIME]

Now I have one more news story for you. Listen for the answers to the 5 WHs again.

[PLAY THAI SIDEWALK STORY]

What are your answers? Now I'd like you to listen again and fill in the cloze on your handout (B). I'll play it through first without stopping, then later go sentence by sentence.

[PLAY THAI SIDEWALK STORY FOR CLOZE COMPLETION]

Now I'll put the completed cloze (C) on the OHP so you can check your answers. [PUT COMPLETED CLOZE ON OHP]

You could also do this as a test, or have students discuss answers with their classmates. The teacher or another student could solicit student answers and fill them in on the transparency. This kind of exercise gives students practice in intensive listening.

Now that we've done some activities with news stories as students, let's go back to being teachers for a few moments and look at some advantages of using news stories in our classes, and some ways of choosing and teaching such stories.

Advantages. The biggest advantage of using news is their availability. The BBC World Service broadcasts news every hour, so that the time to record is always convenient. Some may also receive 24-hour CNN. In Taiwan, on any weekday, we can watch the American PBS, CBS, and ABC nightly news, and some CNN rebroadcasts, either on Taiwan's TV stations or from Japan's satellite NHK news station. I presume this may be the case in other Southeast Asian countries. In addition, there are a few good video courses available using news stories (e.g., Central News 1 - 4, 1992; Meinhof & Bergman, 1993), so teachers can start with these and learn the techniques before trying it on her own.

A further selling point for exposing students to news broadcasts is that university students should be informed about what is happening in the world around them.

Using news has other advantages: topics are varied and the news is really "news". Because news broadcasts consist of many

stories, each of which are relatively short and complete in themselves, the length of the individual story makes it ideal for extensive classroom exploitation. Language teachers who have worked with video (e.g., Stempleski & Tomalin, 1990) advise us to use short segments (one to three minutes) for several specific language tasks rather than longer segments with vague goals. Thus the availability of many short segments enables us to choose one or two of these stories that may be the most appropriate to the class's interests and abilities.

Perhaps most important, the language is authentic. Additionally, a particularly good feature is that TV anchors have clear and accurate pronunication; furthermore, when we are watching the speaker's face, we find comprehension less difficult than when we only listen to the voice of the reporter in the field. Moreover, their grammar is correct, and they use the vocabulary and style of educated people. That is, newspeople tend to speak standard, socially acceptable varieties.

In addition, news programs may expose us to many varieties of language (Katchen, 1990), such as when South Africa's President F.W. de Klerk or Mr. Nelson Mandela or India's Prime Minister Rao are interviewed. We may hear many different geographical or nonstandard forms when the man in the street is asked his opinion. More and more often we hear educated nonnative speakers using English as a lingua franca in world politics, economics, science, and many other fields. Our students will also need to utilize English in many situations in their future professions. They, as nonnative speakers, will have

ample opportunity to use English with the other nonnative speakers they come into contact with professionally and personally. Even the less well-educated taxi drivers and fast food clerks have contacts with foreign visitors in English.

News broadcasts often also provide additional aids to comprehension. They may add information with apposition, paraphrase, or repetition to help us remember the context, such as "Bill Clinton, the American president, ..." They show maps to help us locate the area in the world, such as a map of Asia with Thailand and Bangkok pointed out. The name of the location is usually printed at the bottom of the screen when we hear the report from the scene. Names of famous or important people or experts being interviewed also appear on the screen. All these little extras help facilitate understanding, and we teachers can point these out to students.

Choosing and Preparing News Stories. We are all more comfortable with topics we already know something about. We English teachers are familiar with the jargon and ways of speaking of our profession, but if a nuclear physicist came to lecture us in the same way he would address his colleagues, we would be lost. Our problem would not necessarily be one of language but one of context: we are simply not familiar with the concepts.

We have to remember this when we choose news stories for our students. We would not choose a story about the legal intricacies of a nurses' strike in Britain, not only because none of us really cares but because we don't know the background. This is one reason for being careful about using the domestic BBC

news broadcasts or the US broadcasts and even the 30-minute CNN broadcasts. CNN World Report, BBC World Service, of ITN would be better choices. Why?

These broadcasts use stories that are of international interest; thus students are likely to have heard the same stories in their native language and be familiar with the ideas and issues involved. Of course, we must encourage students to follow the news in their native language. With English language newspapers or news magazines such as Time or Newsweek, they can also read about the same stories in order to check the spelling of names and also the specialized vocabulary for talking about that topic (e.g., ceasefire). Furthermore, a number of international stories remain in the news over long periods of time (the Middle East, South Africa, Somalia, Bosnia, GATT), so students can gradually build up background on these issues. Then, when the student hears a news story about these areas, he will only have to figure out how the new information fits into the framework he already has.

Other general or human interest stories can be used and even introduced or followed up by discussion activities (e.g., environmental protection, children's rights). There is an advantage here for the teacher. The ordinary news story is quickly dated and becomes old news, so the teacher may only have the chance to use it once. So don't spend too much time preparing these. You may want to use these for more extensive listening or for a quiz. Yet these pollution stories I used today are two years old but they don't seem like such old news.

I use this sequence of three stories in my own class with some slight differences from the way I used them here today. News stories on topics in medicine, science, lifestyles, education, and so on tend to be not too technical (as opposed to the language of a documentary), though you may have to teach some vocabulary.

This leads us to another area of concern: what kinds of pre-teaching activities should the teacher include before showing the news story? For some stories, teachers may need to spend some time asking students some background questions before viewing, even when such stories appear in the local press, to remind them and focus their attention. For a story on the fighting in Bosnia, we should ask, at the very least, where Bosnia is, who is fighting whom and why? We may also have to teach correct spelling and pronunciation of the names of people and places. Names are rendered quite differently in Mandarin Chinese, for example, so we have to make a special effort to present the correct English spelling and pronunciation. Special vocabulary may also be needed, as in our story about the Bangkok police, where we had affluence, noxious, coax and cajole, terminal, and stilts.

News stories have structure; this structure is not the same in all cultures/languages. For example, the BBC World Service begins a story with a summary of the main points by the anchor. that is the minimum; some stories end there. Then they switch to a reporter in the field who tells us the story in more detail with examples. His report may include a comment by an expert or a main participant in the story, such as the testimony we saw by

the doctor at the police hospital. After that, the reporter in the field either concludes or we have a repetition of the participant and reporter sequence. When the anchor reappears, it is to begin another story. If students are aware of this structure, they have some idea what kind of information is coming next.

Possible Techniques. We have just done a number of activities with news stories. We watched silently for the general idea, for the problem, causes, effects, possible solutions. We tried to guess the answers to who? what? where? when? why? perhaps even how? We could also watch silently and pay attention to writing such as place and person names, maps, graphs (we can freeze-frame to point these out). We could watch with sound for answers to our questions above. We could listen for specific words and try to remember the words around them; this helps students to listen carefully to each sound and to keep longer segments in short term memory until they can write them down. We could also make up True/False questions, Multiple Choice questions, or content questions. These are particularly good for quizzes. We could prepare discussion activities for before or after viewing; this activity would be especially good with controversial social issues students are interested in. We could also have students complete a cloze, either as shared work or as a quiz (pause and repeat more often for a quiz). As students get more proficient, you can omit more and more words. With a small class and enough equipment (or if we have a lab with these facilities for student use on their own time) students

could transcribe a whole story or a short segment on their own.

Often the news story itself suggests which of these activities you would like to use with it. Vary the activities, using perhaps two with each story. As you use each technique, you will get a sense of what works for your students. Now, after all those serious topics, let's do something that's more fun.

MUSIC VIDEOS

One of the five stations offered by STAR-TV our students really like--MTV. I feel a little old for it myself, but after hearing a few talks about using it (Murphey, 1991; Louise, 1991), I decided to try it. Here is one example that we can try. This one I'm going to show you silently, BUT only half of you are going to see it. So I want . . . to turn around. Watchers, pay attention to what you see because later you are going to have to tell your partner what you saw. You may want to take notes.

[PLAY VIDEO, GIVE OUT QUESTIONS (D) TO NON-WATCHERS, GIVE 3 MINUTES TO ASK EACH OTHER QUESTIONS]

Let's find out what you saw. Did you see any . . .
By the way, what do you think this song is about? How can you tell? Is the music fast or slow? Now let's all watch and listen.

[PLAY VIDEO WITH SOUND]

In your handouts (E) you have a cloze of this song. Do you remember any of the parts? Let's see what you remember. Now I'll play it again and stop after our blanks. Let's see if we

can fill it in together.

[PLAY VIDEO WITH PAUSES TO COMPLETE CLOZE]

At this point teachers and students could write in the answers together on the transparency; finally, we could show the complete text on the OHP, as we will do now (E). The last activity of the class would be to show the video again from beginning to end for relaxed enjoyment.

Usually I give students the first half of a line and they have to fill in the parts that rhyme. This is actually rather difficult and for a more advanced level class. For a lower level class, I would give them more of the text. Remember that in songs, there are parts that are repeated and these are usually the parts they can fill in first. This is exactly what happened in our case. With students, who are much less experienced than this audience of teachers here, we spend a lot of time listening line by line using pause or freeze frame to fill in the missing words. In order to save time, we won't do that now.

Unless you already have a music video you'd like to use, you have to find suitable material. Janet Louise (1991) suggested turning on MTV and setting your VCR to record for 6 hours, whether or not you are watching it (you can usually record with the TV turned off). Later, when you have time, you can watch what you have recorded, noting the location or even re-copying those you might like to use, and skipping fast forward over those you reject.

What criteria should you use for selecting or rejecting a music video? There are several points to consider. If I find

the words or images offensive or I think my students would, I'd reject it. I don't think many people would find this particular music video offensive, but they would be offended by many others we see on TV. When I use an interview with the pop singer Madonna, I follow it up with the music video "Express Yourself", which I don't particularly like, being older. Because it is questionable, I only use it with upperclassmen toward the end of the course. I've also found that discussing whether it's offensive and why helps those who may be offended to accept my reasons for showing it. Each teacher has to decide what is acceptable in the society and for the age of the students.

Since we, as language teachers, are primarily interested in using the words of the song, even if we do other activities with it first (e.g., silent viewing, prediction activities), we want the words to be clear. A solo singer is usually easier to understand than a group, and front views of the singer's face saying the words help comprehension. The singer should have clear pronunciation and the music or other sounds shouldn't overpower the voice. Even if the rhythm of the song is fast, the number of words per second should be relatively low. Fast rap is almost impossible for many native speakers to understand.

Speed and the other factors mentioned can make parts of some songs incomprehensible to native speakers; therefore, we have to be particularly careful when selecting material for nonnative speakers. These factors, combined with theme and visual images, will probably lead you to reject nine out of ten music videos. Yet even if you get only five acceptable videos from your six

hours of recorded data, that's still a lot of material to exploit.

If you use a music video for other activities, students will probably ask you for the words, so you might as well prepare a cloze. One word of caution: don't just copy the words that may be on a songsheet from the CD or tape of the song. Check first: the music video may contain more or less than the audio version or there may be variations. If the songsheet came from an old, illegal pirated version of the tape, the words may be wrong (this happens very often in Taiwan, even when songs in English are subtitled in English on Chinese television).

When students try to figure out the words, show them how to depend on more than just their ears. In this video, many of the images reflect the words, such as Climbing up the back stairs. Can you remember some of the others? [shaking their umbrellas, boats are on the water, flowers in the water, see the old cathedral, man in his twenties] This was why I had you ask each other what you saw--to have you think of those images and find the words for them because you would find them in the song. In most other music videos, there isn't such a direct correspondence of images and words.

The words should make semantic sense and they are often somewhat predictable from the context. In "Am I Right" we have there's a chill wind _____. Here in the air makes sense. Then we have I wrap up _____ where from the cold fits in nicely with the previous idea.

This is also a good place to talk about the role of rhyme in English songs. This particular song doesn't have much rhyme,

although we do have laughing off the rain and until it starts again. Also, walking miles around the town helps us figure out but I had to play it down. I'm not completely sure of this latter one; for me, it makes sense if the cathedral makes the man think of weddings but, since his love is gone, he doesn't want to think of what he cannot have, so he plays it down.

One could also point out grammatical structure and style, as in Am I _____, am I _____, or am I _____. As songs have many of the characteristics of poetry, we can use them for teaching language. That is, it is indeed possible to use a pop song to teach discourse structure.

Occasionally watching a singer's mouth can help us decide what the word is (and also show students what good enunciation looks like). Knowledge of grammar and idioms can help students decide what word they heard. This is especially true of function words such as contracted forms of BE and prepositions. Even in speech these are unstressed and in songs they are often unclear. Are papers blowing IN the wind or ON the wind? No matter how the singer may mumble, the native speaker selects IN as most probable.

So we have seen that in one four-minute music video, we could generate a number of activities, only a few of which we have had the chance to do today. Even if you use only one music video per semester (I use two at the most), students tend to be so fascinated, and they gladly participate. They hear this music all day long anyhow; we might as well try to get them to listen to it for a change, to listen attentively to the language.

Music videos are a part of pop culture, of youth culture, even here in Asia. When we deliberately separate and analyze specific parts--the visual, the lyrics, the music--we help students better understand its structure and its appeal. This extralinguistic learning is also worthwhile.

CONCLUSION

English language teaching receives high priority in the booming economies of Southeast Asia such as Taiwan and Thailand. In these same areas more and more people can watch English language broadcasts on satellite TV in their homes. It's time that we teachers showed our students how they can use this resource to advance their English language skills on their own.

Today we looked at some activities that would be appropriate to use when first introducing students to authentic TV broadcasts. News stories are ideal because of their length, availability, and the varied techniques we can use with them. Music videos appeal to our students and may help convince them that learning a language can also be enjoyable. The creative teacher can take what we did today and adapt it to his/her students to best meet their learning needs.

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A

PART I

(BBC World Service Television, March 28, 1992)

MEXICO

The Mexican government imposed the second stage of its anti-smog plan this week after pollution in the capital reached record levels. Factories have been ordered to cut their output by 30%, and road work and painting have been suspended. Drivers have to leave their cars at home for two days a week.

Mexico City lies under an almost permanent dome of photo-chemical smog. It's one of the most polluted cities in the world. Earlier this month the government introduced emergency measures, ordering restrictions on factories and cars in an effort to reduce the harmful emissions. But levels of ozone, a highly toxic form of oxygen, have continued to climb. This week they reached more than two and a half times acceptable world health standards. Hospitals are being inundated with patients suffering from a variety of chest and nasal complaints. Even a short walk through the city is a health hazard, producing sore throats, headaches, and tiredness.

Part of the problem is geography. At more than 7000 feet, Mexico City has less oxygen than it sea level, so fuel burns less efficiently. The city is hemmed in by mountains on three sides, preventing polluted air from dispersing.

But the main cause of ozone pollution is the car. The city's petrol comsumption has increased by 18% since 1988. Transport policy is now being geared to persuade motorists out of their cars and on to the city's metro. Politicians are now being forced to make choices between imposing unpopular measures such as restricting car use or allowing one of the world's largest cities to become uninhabitable.

PART II

As you watch the following story silently, try to answer the questions of WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHY?
What is the problem the story is talking about?
Also try to guess if the story will mention any causes or effects of the problem. You should be ablé to guess the main idea without even hearing the words spoken.

B

(BBC World Service Television, March 28, 1992)

THAILAND

A new law is being introduced in Thailand banning the _____ of _____ and merchandise on the _____ of the _____ Bangkok, but the authorities _____ face opposition from _____ Thais, who believe it threatens the city's _____ way of trading.

You see them out _____ every day, _____ of Bangkok's _____ doing a brisk _____, peddling everything from counterfeit _____ to steaming bowls of _____ soup. They pay no rent _____ and they clog up the streets _____. But soon that _____ all _____.

In an effort to _____ the city, new wide-sweeping _____ are being introduced. But for many Thais, the _____ are an integral _____ of the _____ in Bangkok, particularly the makeshift _____. Every day _____ of people rely _____ for a _____ meal at a _____ _____. The authorities, _____, say they are a _____ risk, and that their inconvenient _____ forces pedestrians onto the _____. This hampers the flow of _____, which is already among the _____ in the _____.

The Bangkok _____ undoubtedly have their _____ cut out for _____, but with a whole array of _____ and environmental _____ to keep the _____ busy, it will take _____ than just _____ a law to _____ out this _____ street _____.

C

(BBC World Service Television, March 28, 1992)

THAILAND

A new law is being introduced in Thailand banning the selling of food and merchandise on the streets of the capital Bangkok, but the authorities will face opposition from many Thais, who believe it threatens the city's traditional way of trading.

You see them out there every day, thousands of Bangkok's merchants doing a brisk business, peddling everything from counterfeit gold watches to steaming bowls of rice soup. They pay no rent or taxes and they clog up the streets and sidewalks. But soon that could all change.

In an effort to clean up the city, new wide-sweeping laws are being introduced. But for many Thais, the stalls are an integral part of the life in Bangkok, particularly the makeshift restaurants. Every day millions of people rely on them for a good meal at a low price. The authorities, however, say they are a health risk, and that their inconvenient location forces pedestrians onto the street. This hampers the flow of traffic, which is already among the slowest in the world.

The Bangkok authorities undoubtedly have their work cut out for them, but with a whole array of social and environmental problems to keep the police busy, it will take much more than just passing a law to wipe out this entire street culture.

D

Ask your partner if s/he saw any of the following.

house	tree	chain
sailboat	man wearing glasses	old woman
someone running	children	bridge
someone dancing	monkeys	bed
restaurant	classroom	sunflowers
man with a hat	umbrella	cars
money	table	stairs
flower seller	organ grinder	bicycle
river	lake	ocean
man wearing a flower	man with a mustache	bare feet
train	streetcar	street lights
tunnel	woman carrying an umbrella	

E

Erasure
"Am I Right?"

Wanderin' through the back roads, _____

To resolve _____

Am I right, _____

_____, there's a chill wind _____

I wrap up _____, pull the blinds _____

Who was here? _____

_____ the lonely people walkin' miles _____

_____ but I have to play it down.

_____

And life carries on as normal although you're not around.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Am I right, _____

_____ the lonely people walkin' miles _____

_____ but I have to play it down.

_____

And life carries on as normal although you're not around.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Wanderin' through the back roads, _____

To resolve _____

Am I right, _____

F

Erasure
"Am I Right?"

Wanderin' through the back roads, and the rain comes rushin' down
To resolve your love for this man in his twenties.
Am I right, am I wrong, or am I just dreaming?
Climbing up the back stairs, there's a chill wind in the air.
I wrap up from the cold, pull the blinds in the window.
Who was here? Was it you? Or am I just dreaming?
Look at all the lonely people walkin' miles around the town.
I can see the old cathedral but I have to play it down.
Boats are on the river setting up their sails,
And life carries on as normal although you're not around.
Waiting at the bus stop, laughing off the rain,
Shaking their umbrellas 'til it starts again.
Flowers in the water floating off downstream,
Paper in the gutter blowing in the breeze...
Am I right, am I wrong, or am I just dreaming?
Look at all the lonely people walkin' miles around the town.
I can see the old cathedral but I have to play it down.
Boats are on the river setting up their sails,
And life carries on as normal although you're not around.
Waiting at the bus stop, laughing off the rain,
Shaking their umbrellas 'til it starts again.
Flowers in the water floating off downstream,
Paper in the gutter blowing in the breeze.
Wanderin' through the back roads, and the rain comes rushin' down
To resolve your love for this man in his twenties.
Am I right, am I wrong, or am I just dreaming?